

I. Two types of things we can say about woman: what she was and is, on the one hand and what she ought to be, on the other. We can analyze S's book by looking at what she says in these two classes.

A. What woman was and is

1. I would agree ~~quite readily~~ <sup>quite readily</sup> with S's account of what woman was and is.

a. e.g. "woman in truth represents the everyday aspects of life; she is dullness, prudishness, shabbiness, boredom" [175] - How many of us look at our mothers, their friends, - or our own friends from youth who have kept into an early marriage - to see all this charm and interest ~~for~~ us as people?

b. "[housework] is tiresome, empty, monotonous, as a career" [427]

c. Women become obsessed with unimportant things.

"Because she does nothing, she eagerly seeks self-realization in what she has" [428]

2. but everything said above would apply equally well to the majority of men. "[middle-class men] are destined like woman to the repetition of daily tasks, identified with ready-made values, respectful of public opinion, and seeking on earth <sup>only</sup> naught but a vague comfort, [and therefore] are in no way superior to their accompanying females." [588]

a. although S. does often imply that these traits are only found in woman, if we give her the benefit of the doubt we can see that she is concerned with why they are found in so many women - in other words she is interested in the character of women in general. No one would say of men in general that they are boring ... etc.

3. There are, however, some aspects of women that are peculiarly female - And these aspects



S. brings out continually by analogy with the ~~sexual~~ act of <sup>sexual</sup> intercourse.

a. in intercourse man achieves transcendence while woman retains her immanence. [540, 5; 564, 59]

1. man transforms actively while woman receives and maintains in a lower level of activity.

b. when this act is used ~~analogously~~ to indicate something about the situation of man and women in general we find woman becoming identified with nature:

1. "Nature is ~~the~~ a vein of gross material in which the soul is imprisoned, and she is the supreme reality; she is Contingency and Idea, the finite and the infinite; she is what opposes the Spirit, and the Spirit itself. Naturally, her enemy, she appears as the dark chaos from whence life wells up, as this life itself, and as the overfender toward which life tends. Woman sums up nature as mother, wife, and Idea; these forms now mingle and now conflict, and each of them wears a double visage." [134] ✓

2. because woman is not only nature, but something more — and not only Spirit, but something less, S. describes her situation in general as one of mediation between man and nature, a mediation between the individual and the cosmos. [160] ✓

4. we now reach a point at which a pure description of a situation becomes intermingled with an explanation of the situation. Instead of just telling us what is the case about women, we find her telling us why she is as she is. And it is here that I begin to

never  
from matter dist.



have some difficulty in giving her my approval. let us look more closely at what she says about woman's situation, first in ~~her~~ individual relationships with men as evidenced primarily in intercourse and then with her situation in general.

Freudian  
tense accepted.  
is a violation  
when we know or eat?

- A. for women intercourse "always constitutes a kind of violation" [348]
- B. "man lies upon his prey like the eagle and the hawk; woman lies in wait like the carnivorous plant, the bog, in which insects and children are swallowed up." [32]
- C. "It is woman who generally feels that her partner is using her as an instrument. Nothing but high admiration can compensate for the humiliation of an act that she considers a defeat." [609] ✓
- D. "Intercourse invades her individuality" [19]
- E. "It robs her husband of prestige" [432]

We can see from these examples that S. is no longer impartially describing the relationship between a man & a woman. It has taken the form of a violent war between ~~two~~ two individuals in which the woman

Discusses  
subject / object  
(initiate) / (initiate)  
dist.

is plundered, attacked, crushed; while the man who wins in one level, loses on another by incurring the disgust & hate of the woman. We find the same sort of attitude emanating from her description of the situation of men & women in general.

- A. "The husband 'forms' his wife not erotically alone, but also morally and intellectually; he educates her, marks her, sets his imprint upon her. ... 'In yielding she resists, thus allowing masculine activities to go on indefinitely' [164]



B. "man wants woman to be object: she makes herself object; at ~~the~~ <sup>the very</sup> moment when she does that, she is exercising, a free activity. Therein is her original freedom; ~~but must decide,~~ ~~the most~~ "He demands that his "thing" give herself over to him of her own free will: in body he asks her to feel pleasure, in the home she must sincerely recognize his superiority and his merits." [579]

C. "The devaluation of woman represents a necessary stage in the history of humanity, for it is not upon her positive value but upon man's weakness that her prestige is founded." [643]

The feudal world no doubt claims that because woman's sexual situation is of such and such a nature, the situation of woman in society inherits this nature. The society is the individual 'unit large', as it were. However, S. claims that precisely the opposite is true. It is because woman's situation in the world has a certain character of conflict, repression, etc. that in the sexual act woman responds as an inferior, suppressed being. [348]

A. "Thus the passivity that is the essential characteristic of the 'feminine' woman is a trait that develops in her from the earliest years. But it is wrong to assert that a biological datum is concerned; it is ~~a~~ <sup>in</sup> fact a destiny imposed upon her by her teachers and by society." [261]

B. "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female represents in society;



it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine." [249]

How are we to decide which of these two explanations ~~relation~~ of the relationship <sup>between the individual and society</sup> is ~~the~~ correct? And before we can settle this question, it must be determined whether S's descriptions of the individual's situation and the ~~society~~ <sup>situation</sup> of society as a whole are correct.

A. It is hard to deny that several women seem to be in continual conflict with men in society as a whole. We can see the defensive PTA president, or the 'masculine' teacher, or just the ordinary tight lipped and bitter housewife as fitting clearly under S's description. It is difficult to believe, however, that all women are fighting this battle. Similarly, statistics indicate that a large majority of women are frigid sexually. This implies that something is amiss in their attitude towards intercourse. We also know that it is only possible for women to achieve climax during intercourse when they are able to abandon themselves completely to their partner. The inability of a large number of women to do so (40%) indicates that some sort of battle or conflict is occurring between her and her partner. There is no question that S's description of the female situation is accurate for a certain



percentage of women. But I would object to her claim that all women consider intercourse to be an act of defeat, for eg.

B. The difficulty, however, is that if S. is correct then the ~~only~~ <sup>majority</sup> women who are ~~able to~~ <sup>not</sup> achieve frigida are those who succumb to their social image. In other words, if it is the case that sexual relations are determined by woman's situation in general, it ~~would follow~~ <sup>would follow</sup> that the only <sup>way</sup> for women to achieve satisfaction ~~in general~~ is to adjust to the social situation. If a woman ~~is not able to~~ wants to transform the situation of women in society, she is doomed to a state in which she cannot succumb to a situation in intercourse which she believes to be objectively wrong. In other words, psychologists can tell us what we must do in order to achieve satisfaction by integrating into a society. While S. wants to claim that the values which society has set for us are wrong and we should not integrate ourselves into them. To do so would be a "traitorous" act. If, in fact, sexual relationships are determined ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> society at large, then it would be possible to change the sexual relationships by transforming society. In this case, it



might ~~would~~ eventually be possible, for.eg. for women to achieve climax during intercourse without having to abandon themselves completely - without having to become passive at precisely that moment.

If, on the other hand, the situation of women in society is the reflection of a more basic ~~psychological~~ <sup>biological</sup> element of womanhood, then the problem becomes more difficult. In this case if a woman is dissatisfied ~~with~~ with her role, the option is open to her to either 1) try to adjust to what society demands of her or 2) to fight society (men) and be unable to achieve integration sexually. If ~~psychological~~ <sup>sexual</sup> adjustment is unimportant to her, then the second choice will no doubt be made.

The difficulty for us as women today is the uncertainty of the outcome. If we knew that S's view <sup>about the rel. between sexual nature and society</sup> is correct, then a great many more women would no doubt try to do their part to change their roles - and ultimately a change in their relationships with men would occur. However, most women fear that S. is wrong and that really we are inferior, passive, static beings who are destined to a middle role in the world. In fact, even stronger than the belief that we are such creatures - we find the inherent fear that we should be such creatures. That is quite true that



men encourage this fear generally.

L/c. we come now to the crux of the whole issue. what should women be?

1. the answer to this question will depend upon whether or not you believe there are what might be called 'eternal natures' or 'essences' of a thing.

a. if you believe that there is an essence of womanhood and that this essence consists in being a type of conscious being whose destiny is fulfilled through men, then you will no doubt seek to realize this destiny in your own case — finding a husband, turning away from any intellectual pursuit which does not directly aid you as wife — and mother — and achieving full satisfaction in life from doing so.

b. there are other types of eternal natures which could be offered for women — but (a) is the most common.

c. if, however, you reject the notion that women has a nature or essence — as S. does, then another situation develops. 'S. — as an existentialist does precisely this.

✓ 1. "The fact is that we have nothing to do here with laws of nature. It is the difference in their situations that is reflected in the difference men and women show in their conceptions of law." E6043



for the existentialist, nature is created by the individual - in the choices he makes. Consequently, happiness ~~is to choose~~ is to choose to become something. This is in ~~contrast~~ stark contrast to the type of ethics we find ~~in~~ in those philosophies which believe in fixed essences or eternal natures. There, happiness took the form of fulfilling one's potential - or living in accordance with one's nature. The psychologist is subsumed under this type of category by appealing to the sexual aspect of one's nature as being the most important aspect. ~~But he might claim that~~ Other philosophers might claim that this consisted in contemplation of God. The falsity of this doctrine S. would claim is the implication that happiness consists in being at rest. She goes on to say: "This notion we reject, for an ~~aspect~~ perspective is that of existentialist ethics. Every subject plays his part as such specifically through exploits or projects that serve as a mode of transcendence; he achieves liberties only through a continual reaching out towards other liberties. There is no justification for present existence other than its expansion into an indefinitely open future." EXXVIII?

\*  
D. And now we see the false belief of all existentialist ethics - namely that the believers in fixed essences - or natures claimed that happiness consists in being at rest.



2. The question now becomes: Is law a should law be the kind of thing in which an individual trusts for his future? In which he asserts his will by choosing a novel type of action? Or is there another notion of law which both is and should be striven for?

a. Modern words, happiness, liberty and law for S. all incorporate a notion of the individual in which aggressive activity is the dominant characteristic. And in contrast to this notion, passivity of any type means being a traitor to the cause of liberty, law & happiness.

b. I want to maintain <sup>in justice</sup> ~~in justice~~ contradiction to this that ~~there are two~~ <sup>there are two</sup> crucial characteristics of law. <sup>one is activity but the other is</sup> ~~one is activity but the other is~~ <sup>receptiveness to others.</sup> ~~receptiveness to others.~~ This receptiveness is not, as S. would indicate, a stagnant passivity. Rather it is an <sup>dynamic</sup> ~~active~~ type of passivity - a holding oneself open. Happiness would consist then in a balance between sheer activity ~~as S. advocates~~ which is received passively by a law and receptive



passivity of the sheer activity of the free. Liberty is only one side of free - and happiness - the other side - which is equally important is this openness - this ~~dynamic~~ <sup>dynamic</sup> passivity in which the individual receives the other.

c. without both sides of ~~this~~ <sup>this relationship</sup> free is less than it can be. S. stresses the active side alone - one ~~individuals~~ ~~and~~ sees free as a continual struggle between two people in which each tries to dominate the other. In doing so, she is reacting to a long tradition in which for women at least, free was supposed to consist totally in passivity or receptiveness. Her book serves as a testimony to the attitudes which have been one-sided for centuries. The truth is, however, that free and happiness should consist neither in total passivity nor in total activity - but in a delicate balance between the two. It should be the kind of relationship in which two people thrust forward and open themselves to one another. This is the highest form of free possible.

3. Finally - it may be said that one of the great achievements of S's book



is the indication of why it is that women generally are incapable of such a type of relationship. <sup>The reason being</sup> ~~that~~ women are not able to escape their narcissism.

a. "what woman essentially lacks today for doing great things is forgetfulness of herself." (661)

b. in order to have like a man must be able to transcend herself - get out of the shell of her narrow emotions & thoughts and reach out to the world - to feel the world as her own - one must pass from the particular to the universal.

\* | c. but as S. quite correctly points out - "as long as she has to struggle to become a human being, she cannot become a creator." - [672] - the situation of woman is such that she is unable to transcend herself from the time she is just beginning to be perceptive. All her energy is bent upon herself - her problems - there is little room for activity of the level that the free man is asked to strive for.

d. I want to claim - that it is equally the case that woman's narcissism also holds her back from achieving true receptiveness to others - from experiencing the other part of the love relationship - Sheer passivity is not love - when someone has nothing to offer - it is no choice to become a blotter for another person - we



hour of this phenomenon daily in the masculine world of 'yes-men'. The receptive passivity of a full, grown individual, on the other hand, is rare. It is difficult to achieve - ~~not~~ because it is an dynamic passivity - If a person is a narcissist - as are most women. This receptiveness is a ~~fake~~ - they really do not get outside of their own desires - in passively agreeing with another person. Again - it is the situation of women which is to blame for this lack of ability to love. When she is struggling to become a woman - she cannot open herself to another - especially a man - without fearing that he will dominate her. If any of this fear remains - true receptiveness is lacking.

e. Therefore, we can see that generally woman is incapable of experiencing love - and happiness in the fullest degree because she:

- 1) cannot actively thrust forward in the world.
- 2) cannot passively (in a positive sense) receive others who are thrusting forward.

f. and the reason for this is her narcissism - which is the result



of a constant struggle in life to achieve dignity and acceptance as a human being.

3. What specifically can we do?

A) Try to conquer our own narcissism. Realizing that it will probably be impossible for several generations to have women who are free from this curse. But we must begin.

1. <sup>we should</sup> stop turning in upon ourselves constantly - scrutinizing our every ~~thing~~ & mood.
2. I don't mean by this to stop being perceptive about people - but just stop being so impressed about our own feelings. A poet is introspective - but he sees in himself the soul of the universe. We usually see only ourselves.

B) Pursue something that interests you. something that tears you outside yourself. Don't give in to society's demands to stop growing &

1. part-time jobs - perhaps -
2. don't go to the opposite extreme work full time - full time family - then problems in both realms assume such proportion that again you are forced to turn in upon your ~~problems~~ your conflicts - & you are in a worse state than before you ~~started~~ to move outside yourself



c) Finally - understand that the transition women are going through is very difficult for men. Again it will take generations before men will accept women as free-active and open-receptive beings. It will take generations before they will be able to love women as they now can men.

i. I call this the love-lag. Before women can be capable of love, she must be able to share in the two-sided relationship I described above. This will take a long time - & while the struggle is going on - it is difficult - because men find it difficult to readjust to the new type of love they are called upon to share. They must find it worth while to be <sup>dynamically</sup> ~~actively~~ passive or receptive to a woman. If a woman has nothing to offer to this receptivity, is it no wonder that men close off their openness and retreat to other beings who do have something to offer them? Similarly, if they find a passive blotter



## women in the world.

1. not a historical survey of some important women.

c. ↑ bore

b. also a fake.

1. as it seems to imply that women have made it (// negro)
2. look closer at title: men in the world is absurd because men are the world.
3. so women are breaking into the world — so we must ask will the world assimilate them — or will it change?
4. the answer lies in deciding something about the nature of women. what are they?

2. nature of women.

a. two questions: what women have been : and what they should be or could

1. the past -

a. face the parity of contributions — intelligence

b. Simone de Beauvoir expresses it this way:

"woman in truth represents the everyday aspects of life; she is shrewdness, prudence, shabbiness, boredom."

c. woman was always defined as being 'other' than man — her purpose in living was solely to serve and ~~live~~ fulfill herself through some man.

a. the catholic church has epitomized this attitude.

b. e.g. Pharisees in talking about a worthy wife says

"Her husband is prominent at the city gates as he sits with the elders of the land. She makes garments and sells them, and stocks the merchants with belts."

c. think about the new testament — many — etc. are valued because & only because they have helped some man to transform the world.

d. gain this concept of womanhood. the good woman becomes someone who does these things well. she allows men to change the world. She is passive; he active.

e. this is what most women have been and are today.

1. now we must ask... is this what they should be. and our answer to this will tell us what women should contribute to the world.



## 2. The future -

a. there are two schools of thought about ~~the nature of things~~ <sup>this</sup> -

1. essences are fixed
2. essences are created

if 1. - then what should the modern woman be doing -

- a. waking primarily to help some man contribute to the world - having a family - & maybe having a hobby or two - like going to the O.H. club meeting once a week - & donating money occasionally for parties in some underdeveloped countries.
- b. if she chooses to contribute in any fuller way - she will have to do so by "becoming a man" - e.g. Indira Gandhi - Chavvy Chav - (even Jackie Kennedy's fame results from the role she played as wife of the U.S. President) - & we know several of these masculine women who have forsaken wifely & motherly roles to pursue some career.
- c. we can see why, if someone accepts a view of nature as being fixed - woman passive & suffering servant - that it is false to point to a few women who have given their lives to careers - and then say that women have an important role in the world. - only those women who chose to become men - who play by the male rules have contributed significantly - the ordinary woman still must serve in a secondary capacity (Mrs. Gandhi & the other Indian women).

2. Simone de Beauvoir says 2 - essences are created - female passivity has been looked upon her by men -

a. and she goes on to press for a more active female personality -

b. existential program for her = war - & balance only when equal!

1. if 1 correct - world balance of power argument - fight to get peace - always suspicious -
2. for existentials the dominant characteristic of her is an aggressive attitude.



c. the consequence of this attitude towards love in terms of impact of women on the world as different <sup>think of</sup> than the attitude we discussed previously where women were passive + men active in their relationships with each other.

1. here we find a program somewhat like practiced in USSR where 70% of the doctors are women. There is little attachment to the family - & the behavior men + women is hardly different than the behavior between two men.

2. women become men - they are assimilated into the world - and do not change it in any unique way -

3. are these the only two possibilities for women: total passivity or total activity? or is there another -

a. let's look again at the notions of love mentioned before - (~~because~~ <sup>identity</sup> ~~love is the motivating force~~)

1. both state that the relationship consists in one dominant characteristic

a. male active / female passive

b. male active / female ~~passive~~ active

b. I want to claim that love should have two dominant char.

||| 1. activity

2. receptiveness

- not stagnant passivity - but  
- dynamic passivity  
- holding oneself open

& it is a delicate balance of the two.

c. therefore women have to create their essence - they have not achieved it yet (// Negroes not achieved respect - not become white to do so - but not black nationalists either - a balance - retain their own characteristics - but open to others).

1. women, for the most part, are not able to experience this sort of love -



2. S. says usually one cannot experience the active + a dynamic holding herself open.
  - a. "as long as she has to struggle to become a human being, she cannot become a creator". - all her energy is focused on herself - so there is little room for activity on the level that the free man is asked to share for.
  - b. she cannot achieve real receptiveness to others for the same reason - no effort to be open; when one has only sheer passivity to offer - it's easy to be a blotter to another person.
  - c. a man wants to share his important activities with someone who is passive from being nothing - also if he opens himself to a woman & nothing positive comes from her - he will get bored soon.

d) I have set up the ideal schedule in which the full beings offer <sup>themselves to</sup> each other in life - what, you may be asking, does this have to do with the UN club?

1. to borrow a verse from a folksong I know.

"

I've ~~just~~ one more thing to ask you,  
if you will only try.

Just take your children by their hand & look into their eyes.  
There you'll find the answer you should have seen before

If you own the world at home  
there'll be no killing anymore"

French the society is the individual written large - has some characteristics.

(2. one of the greatest causes of war is fear of domination - or desire to dominate people are secure in their love for each other they have no need to fetter domination - or no desire to conquer another person or land.



3. further alien love is secure & a rich sharing  
→ automatically people will desire to share  
it even more fully - the distribution  
of world goods might even be considerably -

4. but alien love is absent in small  
families & groups of people - its no wonder  
that the nations suffer -

4. finally - what can we do about it?

a. if girls - try need to compromise - & try to get out  
of our narcissism - constant struggle -  
but win it -

b. if boys - be patient - & open to women - respect  
them - encourage them to think - & do  
not fear their strength - you do not have  
to force women to be inferior out of your  
weakness -

- It is terribly difficult for everyone - as today  
the world is changing radically - our notions of  
male & female are being re-shaped - it's an exciting  
but pushy time to live - but instead of  
shrinking in front of the challenge - we must  
meet it head on -